

The Service Beacon

A monthly publication for FSIS field and headquarters employees.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service

February 1999 Volume 2. Number 9

bea-con (be ken) noun

A signaling or guiding device, such as a lighthouse, located on a coast. A source of guidance or inspiration.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Hello from the Internal Control Staff

by Vincent Fayne, Director Internal Control Staff Telephone: 202-720-5959

The 1996 Food Safety and Inspection Service reorganization made many positive changes; one was to establish the Internal Control Staff within the Office of Management. Many of the Internal Control Staff functions carried over from the former Review and Assessment Program. However, several additional functions were added such as the Reprisal Panel coordinator and monitoring and review of the Assault, Threats, Intimidation, or Interference reporting. We have a small, multidisciplinary technical and administrative staff with expertise in operations research, physical and biological sciences, management and performance analysis, and investigations.

The Internal Control Staff routinely assists managers and their staffs in carrying out their management control responsibilities, provides independent and objective assessments of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency's operating systems, and monitors program improvements and performance. The Internal Control Staff's primary objectives are to

keep Agency officials aware of issues that may potentially compromise the Agency's food safety mission and to protect FSIS resources and assets from fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement.

I ask you to visit us in Room 0615 – South Building (we will be moving in mid-March) to meet our talented and industrious staff. In addition, to better acquaint you with our specific activities, the staff and I are available to brief a small group at your locations. We look forward to working together to help meet the food safety mission objective.

For more information about the ICS access the Office of Management web page at: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/om/adserv.htm

Interim Acting ASD Directors

by Ron Hicks Office of Management Telephone: 202-720-4425

As you may know, Glen Durst retired from FSIS and the Federal Government on January 31, 1999. I will miss him both as a friend and colleague as well as an innovative manager.

We are initiating the selection process for his successor. In the interim, I will appoint each of the ASD Branch Chiefs as Acting Director on a 2 month rotation as follows:

- February and March: <u>Bob Byrd</u>, Paperwork Management Branch
- April and May: <u>Victor</u>
 <u>Randecker</u>, Environmental,
 Health and Safety Branch
- June and July: <u>Ramona Swann</u>, Procurement and Property Branch

I know that you will support these individuals during this transitional period. ASD remains committed to providing the Agency with the same level of service you have come to expect under Glen Durst.

ASD Employee Listing

by Bob Byrd, Acting Director Administrative Services Division Telephone: 301-504-4213

ASD moved to the USDA Beltsville Office Facility on January 19. The relocation was necessary to alleviate space constraints at the South Building. The Department has begun renovations planned for the next 8 years, which has displaced several FSIS groups at headquarters.

Attachment 1 to this edition of the Beacon is the complete listing of ASD employees in headquarters and the field. This listing updates the information contained in FSIS Notice 4-99 (dated 1/15/99).

Page 5 of this edition of the Beacon contains an article on the energy conservation design features of the Beltsville Office Facility.

TRAVEL

Outstanding Travel Advances

by Barbara McNiff Budget and Fiscal Services Division Telephone: 202-720-3061

Five times a year, the National Finance Center (NFC) calculates whether the travel advances held by employees are excessive. (Excessive advances are amounts that exceed the claims on the travel vouchers and are not paid within a reasonable time period.) If an advance is determined to be excessive, NFC sends the employee a demand letter requesting the employee to liquidate the advance in 30 days.

If, after receiving the demand letter, the employee does not submit a voucher against which the advance is applied or does not repay the advance in a lump sum, NFC will deduct the total advance from the employee's salary check(s). Frequently, the Fiscal Services Branch receives calls from employees who have not liquidated the advance and are faced with deductions from their salary check. These employees inform us that they have been advised by NFC that their agency's fiscal officer can stop the deductions if they call or fax a request to NFC to suspend collection action. This is true only if the fiscal officer can assure NFC that a voucher is being prepared against which the advance will be applied and will be mailed to NFC immediately. NFC will not stop deductions on the basis of a fiscal officer's claim that it would be a personal hardship to the employee if collection action were pursued in one lump sum.

The tax laws require that advances that are not recouped within a certain time frame become taxable income to the employee. Since NFC does not have a mechanism to

do this, there is no option to extend the repayment past the due date. Therefore, once the demand notice is issued, travel advances cannot be paid back in small increments.

If, for example, the employee has completed a relocation, submitted all his or her travel vouchers and still has a considerable outstanding advance, the employee can, on his or her own, start to repay the advance in small increments before receiving a demand letter. The employee should send a check or money order attached to the face of a travel voucher, complete section A, blocks 39, 42 and 43. (No signatures are required.) Include your social security number on the check and in the memo section of your check, write "Repayment of Advance." Check and voucher should be sent directly to the National Finance Center, P.O. Box 60000, New Orleans, LA 70160.

Decrease in the Mileage Reimbursement Rate

Effective April 1, 1999, the mileage reimbursement rate for Federal employees will decrease from 32.5 cents/mile to 31 cents/mile. The reason for the decrease is that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has decreased the single standard mileage allowance for tax purposes. Title 5 U.S.C. states that the General Services Administration (GSA) cannot exceed the single standard rate set by the IRS in a given year.

To date, there has never been a decrease in the high mileage reimbursement rate.

SUPPLIES

Financial Processing Center Mailings

by Pete Bridgeman Administrative Services Division Telephone: 301-504-4222

It has come to our attention that there are a number of problems occurring with mailings to the Financial Processing Center (FPC) in Des Moines (Urbandale), IA. These problems include:

Obsolete Data Services Center Envelopes are still being used – Any and all envelopes for the Data Services Center at the 210 Walnut Street, Rm 791, location should be discarded. The Data Services Center no longer exists at that location. Any envelopes with the old eagle indicia may not be used in lieu of proper postage. These have been obsolete since 1993. The Data Services Unit is now a part of the Financial Processing Center. The appropriate envelopes for mailing reports to the Data Services Unit are FSIS 5610-1 (2/97 edition), which are the 4 1/8" x 9 1/2" white envelopes, FSIS 1413-50 (2/97 edition), which are the large, 12" x 9 1/2" envelopes, both of which require postage stamps. You may also use the FSIS 1400-89, which is the large blue T & A. Business Reply envelopes. The T & A envelope is acceptable to use for mailings to the Data Services Unit when you are also mailing T & A's in to the Financial Processing Center. These envelopes do not require adding postage stamps. (A number of field personnel are putting stamps on these envelopes - this is not necessary, and is wasting government money).

Federal Express Airbills - For those who are authorized by their district to use the Federal Express Airbills for T & A mailing (FSIS-59), please make sure that you indicate on the

airbill where you are sending the T&A's from. The Financial Processing Center's address should be pre-printed in the "To:" block on the airbill. If you have an airbill that has the FPC's address pre-printed in both blocks ("To" and "From"), please discard and re-order the airbills from Landover. It is important that the airbill accurately reflect where the mailing is coming from – it should never have the FPC address in both blocks.

Another problem related to FPC mailings is, more than one Federal Express mailing coming from the same location on the same day. In one case. three different Federal Express mailings left the same location on the same day, all going to the Financial Processing Center. This is, plain and simple, waste! Always check around with others at your work site to see if anyone else has a Federal Express mailing going out on the same day to the same location. If they are, combine your mailings into one package. In other words, use a little common sense!

Light-Weight Helmets

We field-tested light-weight helmets for 2 months in the Beltsville District, and the results are in. As an alternative to the Bump Cap (FSIS-04BH), we now have a fullsized helmet available that meets ANSI II standards but weighs about 2 ½ ounces lighter than the standard hard-hat helmet. Most of the comments from those who fieldtested them were favorable. The suspension liner on this helmet isn't quite as comfortable as the liner on the standard Bullard helmet (FSIS-04H); this is part of what makes this helmet lighter than the Bullard. We do not recommend this as an alternative to the standard helmet. However, poultry inspectors requiring the protection of a fullsized helmet have found this one to be more desirable than the Bullard helmet because of its lightness. We

are now stocking this light-weight alternative helmet in Landover – the Item Number is FSIS-61, and the Unit of Issue is EA (each).

Export Stamps

We've received a number of complaints regarding the durability of the export stamp that's been in use for the past several years, the Superior #4. We are currently field testing two different makes of stamps in the field for possible future use as a replacement for the Superior stamp. We hope to have an improved stamp available to the field within the next three months. We will keep you posted of progress on the improved stamp.

Non-Monetary Award Items

We are working together with the Human Resources Division (HRD) to expand the inventory of nonmonetary award items available to supervisors for employee recognition where monetary awards may not be available or appropriate. There will be three different ranges of available award items: low range, mid range, and high range. A catalog and special ordering form and instructions are being developed and will be distributed to supervisors for use in selecting the appropriate item for an awardable accomplishment.

While non-monetary award items will be stocked in Landover. ordering will occur between the supervisor and HRD on a special form. Once HRD reviews an order for appropriateness, they will place the order with Personal Property. Motor Vehicle and Supply Section (PPMVSS), ASD. PPMVSS will have Landover send the items to the supervisor for presentation to the employee. HRD and PPMVSS are committed to ensuring that this system will be timely and efficient, so these items may be made available within a short period of

time after the accomplishment. We hope to have this system up and running by March of this year. Stay tuned for more details next month.

Mixed Orders List

We still have a lot of mixed orders coming into Landover. Attachment 2 to this edition of the Beacon is a list of customers who sent mixed orders to Landover in the past month. Repeat offenders are noted. Please don't mix your orders! It slows the process down for everyone. If you are on this list, you are still part of the problem. If you want to get off of this list and be a part of the solution, stop mixing supply items with forms and specialty items on the same order. Supply items must go on a separate order. Repeat offenders. beware....3 strikes and you're out! If the same customer repeatedly sends mixed orders to Landover, we will start sending those orders back to you, unfilled. We don't want to do this, so help us out and stop mixing them.

Congratulations, Floyd!

Floyd Tazel, who has been FSIS' man in Landover for the past year and a half, has been selected for a position with the USDA Office of Operations on a promotion certificate. Flovd was the Supply Technician in the former FSIS Western Region in Alameda, CA, for a number of years prior to joining our staff in Landover during reorganization. He will continue to work on the field supply system in his new capacity, he'll just be working for the Office of Operations now instead of FSIS. He's been a valuable, and valued, member of the PPMVSS staff. Congratulations Floyd, and good luck in your new position!

VEHICLES

Motor Vehicle Accidents

by Brian McNiff Administrative Services Division Telephone: 301-504-4221

All personnel involved in an accident while driving a government vehicle must complete Standard Form 91 (Motor Vehicle Accident Report). It is imperative that the driver complete this form immediately following an accident. A copy of this form must be submitted, along with a police report, to the General Services Administration (GSA) Fleet Management Center that issued the vehicle and a copy must be sent to this office. This form must be completed in detail and signed by the employee's supervisor. Failure to submit these forms in a timely manner may result in the loss of the driver's protection under the Federal Tort Claims Act. There have been several instances recently where Tort Claims against our drivers have been received for accidents for which we never received an SF-91 from our driver. If we have no record or report of an accident, we cannot proceed with resolving the Tort Claim. This puts the driver in a vulnerable position.

In cases where a government vehicle is involved in an accident with another vehicle, the driver of the government vehicle may provide a copy of Standard Form 95 (Claim for Damage, Injury or Death) to the other party. These forms are available through this office and may be requested by phone, memo or e-mail. The government is selfinsured and all inquiries involving the filing of claims against a government driver should be directed to this office. I am the point of contact for government vehicle accidents. All claims and accident reports should be forwarded to me at:

USDA, FSIS, PPMVSS Attn: Brian McNiff 5601 Sunnyside Ave, Mail Drop 5230 Beltsville, MD 20705-5230

Motor Vehicle Database

This office is in the process of updating our motor vehicle database. As a reminder, all drivers of government vehicles are required to submit the following documentation to this office:

- FSIS Form 2450-6 (Government Vehicle Data Sheet). This form is required to be resubmitted when your government vehicle is replaced with a new vehicle.
- FSIS Form 3800-2 (Annual Notice To High Mileage Drivers). This form is required to be submitted annually by all high mileage drivers.
- Form AD-728 (Request and Authorization For Home To Work Transportation). This form is required to be submitted by all drivers who are requesting to park their vehicle at their residence.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

Burn Awareness Week: February 7-13, 1999

by Carol Leonard Administrative Services Division Telephone: 515-727-8980

During this year's National Burn Awareness Week, FSIS employees are reminded of the seriousness of burn injuries and the importance of taking action to prevent and reduce these types of injuries.

Consider these alarming statistics: In the U. S., about 2 million people suffer burns each year. Of these, 300,000 are burned seriously and over 6,000 are fatalities, making burns this nation's third largest cause of accidental death.

First-degree burns affect the outer layer of the skin, causing pain, redness and swelling. Seconddegree burns affect both the outer and underlying layer of the skin, causing pain, redness, swelling and blistering. Third-degree burns extend into deeper tissues, causing brown or blackened skin that may be numb. Burns can be caused by such things as dry heat (like fire), wet heat (such as steam), electricity, or chemicals. Airway burns can be caused by inhaling smoke or toxic fumes, often in a poorly ventilated space. It is important to know how extensive the burn is and how the burn occurred so that appropriate medical treatment can be obtained.

Employees should become familiar with the following FSIS Directives that provide valuable information to aid in the prevention of accidents and injuries including burns:

- FSIS Directive 4791.1, dated 6/19/96, Basic Occupational Safety and Health Program
- FSIS Directive 4791.5 dated 4/27/90, Hazard Communication Program
- FSIS Directive 4791.6, Rev. 1, dated 1/24/95, Emergency Procedures in the Workplace
- FSIS Directive 4791.8 dated 6/19/96, Air Contaminants Safety Awareness Program
- FSIS Directive 4791.12, dated 6/19/96, Reporting and Correcting Occupational Hazards

If you have any questions or would like additional information, you may contact any member of the Environmental, Health and Safety Branch staff.

Safety and Health Videotape Library Moves

by Betsy Kogan Administrative Services Division Telephone: 301-504-4250

The Occupational Safety and Health Videotape Library that was managed by the Environmental, Health and Safety Branch will now be handled through the Human Resources Development Staff (HRDS) in College Station, TX. If you need to request a videotape, you may contact Bob Burke at 409-260-9562 or send a request to: USDA, FSIS, HRDS Attn: Bob Burke 1600 Crystal Park Plaza 2700 East By-pass College Station, TX 77845-5015

You can also find a find a copy of the videos that are available in the HRDS Training Catalog. In a future version of the Beacon we will publish an updated list of videotapes that are available.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Beltsville Office Facility: An Energy Showcase

by Kevin Dressman Administrative Services Division Telephone: 301-504-4247

The USDA Beltsville Office Facility (BOF) is an Energy Saver Showcase Facility. A whole building approach was used to minimize lifecycle costs by using energy efficiency, water conservation, and passive solar features. The design team for the BOF ensured that these technologies were implemented and was involved with the project from program development through construction management. The construction cost of the new facility was \$125 per square foot, which compare very favorably to the average new construction cost of \$150 to \$175

per square foot in the Washington, DC area. The variety of technologies use in the Showcase Facility include:

- Ice storage
- Low-temperature chilled water and air distribution,
- Direct digital controls,
- Energy-efficient lighting systems and daylighting,
- High-efficiency motors and chillers, high-performance building envelope features,
- Water-conserving plumbing fixtures.
- Passive solar design, and
- Variable speed drives.

Using a conservative savings estimate of 25 percent, energy savings of 9.8 billion Btu per year will be achieved.

A 1998 Federal Energy and Water Management Award for Small Groups was presented by the U.S. Department of Energy's Federal Energy Management Program to USDA employees Michael Saznov, Edward Murtagh, David Dunn, and Haren Dhokai for their work on this project.

ISSUANCES

Checklist 4-98 of Agency Issuances

by Mary Wissman Administrative Services Division Telephone: 301-504-4233

FSIS Checklist 4-98 provides a listing of FSIS issuances and gives instructions for discontinuing issuances for FSIS use. Checklist 4-98 covers the fourth quarter of calendar year 1998 (October 1 through December 31, 1998). Copies have been printed and distributed to FSIS offices. An electronic version of Checklist 4-98 has been placed in the "Agency Issuances" public folder in the Exchange mail system (Outlook).

FSIS Checklists 1-98, 2-98, 3-98, and 4-98 and the following notices and directives issued since December 31 provide a complete inventory of issuance activity since publication of the 1998 edition of the FSIS Directives Numeric and Subject Index. The 1999 edition of the Index will be available soon.

Notice 1-99 (1/6/99) Postage Stamp Increase

Notice 2-99 (1/11/99) 1999 Pay Increase

Notice 3-99 (1/13/99)
Patrol Assignment Configuration

Notice 4-99 (1/15/99) Relocation of the Administrative Services Division, Office of Management

Many recent issuances are available in an electronic format from the "PCDIALS" library in Opendesk and from the "Agency Issuances" public folder in the Exchange mail system.

Directives and notices are distributed automatically to applicable Agency employees and offices. Additional copies are available from

USDA, FSIS, ASD, P&DS 5601 Sunnyside Ave, Mail Drop 5241 Beltsville, MD 20705-5241

AUTOMATED INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The National Finance Center and the Year 2000 Fix

by Greg Curtis Automated Information Systems Division

Telephone: 202-720-5959

You have probably read in the newspapers that a computer phenomenon usually referred to as

the "Year 2000 Problem" may cause certain computer systems to malfunction or cease functioning when January 1, 2000 arrives. This problem is based on how computer systems have sometimes been programmed. FSIS has been fixing its own computer systems wherever this problem affects them and the Agency is confident that its systems will be prepared for the Year 2000 early in 1999.

We have had inquiries, however, concerning the condition of the payroll system that the National Finance Center (NFC) operates, which sends us all our paychecks. On August 5, 1998, at the USDA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., the Office of the Chief Information Officer's Year 2000 Program Office hosted a seminar on the National Finance Center Payroll Process. Speakers included representatives from NFC, the Department of the

Treasury, and the Federal Reserve Board.

NFC's Director and its Year 2000 Project Manager described the work that has been done to ensure that all NFC computer systems and devices with embedded microchips will be prepared to function successfully when the Year 2000 arrives. NFC application systems have been checked for Year 2000 (Y2K) functioning and those with problems have been renovated or replaced. Testing is now being conducted to ensure that these measures have been successful, that NFC is ready for the Year 2000, and the payroll process will not be a problem. Likewise, the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Board are also making the Year 2000 changes necessary to accomplish all financial transactions successfully when the Year 2000 arrives. These institutions are working with power

companies, telecommunications companies, banks, and other parties they depend upon and interface with to ensure that they are prepared.

With the progress of these service organizations, there is every reason to believe that we will all receive accurate and timely paychecks in year 2000. We will notify you of further developments in this important service as they unfold in the 1999.

To comment on this newsletter or to submit an article for publication, please contact:
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Beltsville, MD 20705-5250
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The current and past editions of *The Service Beacon* are available electronically on the FSIS OpenDesk and Exchange mail systems as well as on the FSIS Website at: www.fsis.usda.gov/om/beacon.htm

ATTACHMENT 1

Administrative Services Division

Name	Telephone Number	City	Mail Drop
Office of the Director (Location 2L-194E Division Director (Vacant) Campbell, John Hamilton, Perry FAX	301-504-3988 301-504-3988 301-504-4248 301-504-4274	Beltsville	5260
Environmental, Health and Safety Brand Dressman, Kevin Kobaly, G. Ray Kogan, Elizabeth Leonard, Carol Perkerewicz, Roger Randecker, Victor Segna, Lauraine Springfield, Harry Thompson, Harry Wright, Tom FAX	301-504-4247 404-562-5961 301-504-4250 515-727-8980 303-497-5411, ext. 247 301-504-4245 301-504-4249 215-597-4219, ext. 126 214-767-9124, ext. 896 301-504-4246 301-504-4275	Beltsville Atlanta Beltsville Des Moines Boulder Beltsville Beltsville Philadelphia Dallas Beltsville Beltsville	5250
Paperwork Management Branch (Location Office of Chief Byrd, Bob Maynard, Lydia FAX	ion 2L-194A) 301-504-4213 301-504-4274	Beltsville	5240
Directives Management Section Adams, Michelle Marshall, Vickie Proctor, Emily Richardson, Kimberly Wissman, Mary FAX	301-504-4333 301-504-4277	Beltsville	5243
Forms and Reports Section Brooking, Daniel Calderone, Toni FAX	301-504-4234 301-504-4277	Beltsville	5243
Printing and Distribution Section Anderson, Cleve Gibson, Willie Grant, Maxine Harmon, Julie Hasinsky, Anna Hughes, Tom	301-504-4242 202-205-2929	Beltsville Beltsville Beltsville Washington Beltsville Beltsville	5241 2162 So Bldg.
Lyles, Antoinette Shepard, Lester FAX	301-504-4277	Beltsville Beltsville	

Name	Telephone Number	City	Mail Drop
Records Management Section McLendon, Vernie Rardon, Sherri Tibbs, Candice Zrioka, Carol	301-504-4215	Beltsville	5242
FAX	301-504-4281		
Procurement and Property Branch (Lo	cation 2L-194B)		
Office of the Chief		Beltsville	5230
Adams, Julie	301-504-3991		
Harris, Shaina	301-504-3991		
Swann, Ramona	301-504-3991		
FAX	301-504-4274		
Acquisition and Agreements Section			5230
Andrews, Claudia	202-720-9891	Washington	2162 So Bldg.
Elm, Janet	301-504-3993	Beltsville	3
Hersh, Kim	301-504-4211	Beltsville	
Langley, Madonna	301-504-4228	Beltsville	
Nathan, Tawana	301-504-3996	Beltsville	
Voiselle, Anita	301-504-4212	Beltsville	
FAX	301-504-4276		
Personal Property, Motor Vehicle and Su	only Section	Beltsville	5230
Beaty, VIkki	301-504-4223	Bonovino	0200
Bridgeman, Pete	301-504-4222		
Ladd, Tammy	301-504-4227		
McNiff, Brian	301-504-4221		
Miller, Sue	301-504-4220		
Sligh, Jerome	301-504-3992		
FAX	301-504-4231		
Real Property and Facilities Management Section		Beltsville	5230
Bamiro, Yvette	301-504-4268		
Chatmon, John	301-504-3999		
Greenfield, Charles	301-504-3999		
Major, Teresa	301-504-3994		
Patterson, Josefina	301-504-3998		
Pollard, Bradley	301-504-3999		
Reid, Terry	301-504-3997		
FAX	301-504-4231		

Mailing Address:

USDA, FSIS, ASD, (Section Abbreviation) (Employee Name and Location Number) 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, (Mail Drop Number) Beltsville, MD 20705-(Mail Drop Number)

ATTACHMENT 2

Mixed Orders Received at the Landover Service Center December 7 - 29, 1998

Customer ID #	Est.#	City	State	Repeat
37039756	P19674	Summit	MS	
37004472	1566	Wilmington	CA	
37004669	P04118	Long Beach	CA	
37005886	P06022	Oakland	CA	
37007242	4964	Provo	UT	
37010847	4215	Omaha	NE	
37010995	5660	Mc Cook	NE	
37013447	00245E	Amarillo	TX	
37015776	6804	Bloomington	NY	
37015947	P07769	Huntingburg	IN	
37016314	421	Plainwell	MI	Х
37016896	6820	Des Moines	IA	
37018767	567	Milwaukee	WI	
37019780	P06655	Madison	FL	
37023108	P08080	Newbern	TN	
37025241	1749	Frankfort	NY	
37026620	4450	North Tarrytown	NY	
37027669	P09917	Philadelphia	PA	
37029891	10804	Mt Airy	MD	
37032034	EGG01340	Los Angeles	CA	
37033154	1438	Reno	NV	
37033596	6561	Lexington	TN	
37033855	17789	Morton	IL	X
37034355	8997	Hibbing	MN	
37037729	19478	Dublin	TX	
37038571	Boston District	Waltham	MA	
37040746	P19865	Arcadia	LA	
37041394	9681	Jersey Shore	PA	
37042561	11176	Naples	FL	
37044580	20426	Austin	TX	